Abstract

The present study deals with the acquisition of the six most common prepositions in the English language through the employment of a video game specifically designed for this purpose. The thesis features a theoretical overview of the literature relevant to language acquisition, acquisition of function words (more specifically prepositions), game-based acquisition and instruction and its various aspects. The practical part contains a description of the game's design which endeavours to combine the relevant (S)LA theories together with the research on learning through gaming. The game consists of five separate tasks and the mechanics of which are then combined in the final task to elicit the correct responses of the subject. The language used in the game is adjusted for the subjects' level of proficiency, the game is fully voiced and offers a degree of customization. An experiment was conducted on 24 pupils from an elementary school, aged 12-13, who were assessed before and after playing the game. The results revealed that the game did advance the subjects' performance in prepositional structures containing the six most frequent English prepositions at the A1-A2 level of proficiency. Special attention was given to the performance on the preposition *to* compared to its particle counterpart *to*. Results showed the particle *to* to be more challenging to use than the preposition identical in form.

Keywords: language acquisition, game-based learning, educational games, prepositions